

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (NY-28) announced that she introduced H.R. 4755 the Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act which will put the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative into law.

In February, the Environmental Protection Agency, in collaboration with other federal agencies, released the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan, a 40-page document which demonstrated a renewed commitment to the Great Lakes and laid out plans to restore and renew the Lakes. The full report is available [here](#).

“The Great Lakes represent 20 percent of the world’s fresh water supply, and it is about time we put some serious effort into restoring and protecting them,” said Slaughter. “The economies of the cities bordering the Great Lakes, including Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Rochester are absolutely dependent on them making this not just an environmental issue, but an economic one.”

Congress and the Obama Administration have both made clear in recent months that the restoration of the Great Lakes should be a national priority. When the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan was released, Slaughter said,

“I’m pleased to see the EPA making a real commitment to the Great Lakes and our local tributaries; the Genesee River, Buffalo River and Rochester Eighteenmile.” said Slaughter. “What’s most important is that they’re not just talking about more money for a study, but action on invasive species, cleanup of the water and beaches and are looking to do more than prevent harm, but to leave the Lakes in a better place for the next generation.”

This bipartisan legislation will build upon President Obama’s Great Lakes Restoration Initiative by authorizing an annual funding level of \$475 million for FY10-FY14. The legislation aims to address the following areas of concern to Great Lakes health: toxic substances, invasive species, near source health, nonpoint source pollution, habitat restoration, and wildlife

preservation.

Slaughter is a co-chair of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force. Her legislation is being introduced in conjunction with Reps. Vernon J. Ehlers, (D-MI), John Dingell (D-MI), and Mark Kirk (R-IL).

A summary of the Congresswoman's legislation is below:

- Authorizes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative at \$475 million per year. This is the level of funding initially proposed by the President for FY2010.
- Authorizes a new advisory group to the EPA. The two-tiered group is loosely modeled on the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC).
- Authorizes the Federal Interagency Task Force which was established in 2004 by Executive Order which means that it could be dissolved by Executive Order.
- Reauthorizes the Great Lakes Legacy Act which expires in 2010. The authority is for \$150 million per year, the level recommended by the GLRC Strategy Report.
- Reauthorizes EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) at level funding (\$25 million).